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EDITOR R.PALME DUTT

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The Editor
Singing in the Rain

Dick Seabrook
Trade Unions and the Labour Party

Richard Briginshaw
No Middle Road

Kevin Halpin
Liaison Conference

Jeff Staniforth
Student Action

Also: Ald. G. M. Donovan, Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil: Pauline Marstrand: Conrad Wood: Charles Dukes

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Notes of the Month

SINGING IN THE RAIN

'The outlook for the world today is for the greatest era of commercial expansion in history. . . . Unemployment in the sense of distress is finally disappearing; we in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land.'

President HOOVER in 1928, on the eve of the World Economic Crisis of 1929-33.

'This 92nd Congress has a chance to be reported as the greatest Congress in American history . . . this can be the Congress that helped achieve an expanding economy, with full employment and without inflation, and without the deadly stimulus of war.'

President NIXON, State of the Union Message, January 22, 1971.

'The most significant monetary agreement in the history of the world.'

President NIXON, on the Washington Agreement of the Group of Ten, December 20, 1971.

'We stand now on the threshold of a period of growth and prosperity unparalleled since the war.'

Prime Minister HEATH, speech to the Conservative Party Conference, October 16, 1971.

January 9, 1972

It is a remarkable feature of the statesmen of the modern capitalist world, that, whenever the crazy lurches of a sick economic system are most dangerously manifest, they break into paeans and hosannas of lyrical celebration of the glorious new millenium just round the corner—provided the workers are prepared to accept the present sacrifices imposed upon them.

Then and Now

It is true that in 1928, when President Hoover and all the experts of the stock market and financial press were prophesying a prospect of limitless economic expansion on the eve of the biggest world economic crisis in the history of capitalism, the immediate visible conditions at the time were those of the feverish speculative gamble in shares which sent them rocketing sky-high and thus might appear

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to present a picture of prosperity, when in fact it was preparing the crash. But today, with tens of millions of unemployed, suffering the blows of hardship and insecurity to affect the homes and livelihood of the people in all the countries of the capitalist world, not only most heavily in the deprived 'underdeveloped' countries, but also in the wealthiest countries, the United States and Britain; with retarded production and idle plants; with the cruel spiral of the ceaseless rise in prices striking at living standards and in practice cutting real wages of all but the most strongly organised; and with government policy slashing at social provision, extending means tests and reorganising taxation in favour of the wealthy: in the midst of these conditions of the real world to talk of a new paradise round the corner is an insult to the intelligence of all working people. But it is a calculated insult with an obvious political purpose behind it.

Unemployment and Sunshine Talk

There was never a more glaring contrast between words and deeds than in the present performance of President Nixon and Prime Minister Heath. In the midst of still rising mass unemployment, reaching in Britain a record official figure of over a million for the first time since 1940, and over six millions in the US, they pour out their unfailing hot air blasts of sunshine talk. Invariably they discern the sun amid the gloom. At regular intervals they announce on the basis of expert forecasts a discovery of signs of an upward economic turn; and as regularly, after each expert forecast, has so far been falsified by the subsequent facts and officially recognised to have been an error, they return unabashed to make the same joyful prediction. Of course in the switchback of capitalism no movement is just continuous or uniform, and the heaviest downward movement can give place, as after the world economic crisis, to a relative upward movement, alongside continuing mass depression and heavy burdens for the majority of the working population. But this sunshine talk is not primarily expressing the usual complacent assumption of the rule-of-thumb wisdom of capitalist experience that in the normal business cycle a downward movement will eventually at some time or other be followed by an upward movement.

'Full Employment Impossible Without War'?

In the modern era the continuing operation of the business cycle of classic capitalism has been heavily affected and to a degree distorted by the consequences of extreme war conditions or a level of high military expenditure pervading and deforming the whole

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economy. Only the outbreak of two world wars broke the incidence of mass unemployment in the most advanced western capitalist countries. During recent years the costs of the Vietnam war, heavy rearmament with new weapons and overseas military expenditure has been integrated in the structure of the American economy. By June of last year the US Secretary of the Treasury could declare that 'full employment' (by which he made clear that he meant 4 per cent unemployment) would be impossible without war:

> There has never been on an annual basis unemployment down at 4 per cent except in wartime. I don't think the American people will be willing to put up with continuance of the war to get 4 per cent unemployment (US Secretary of the Treasury Connally, statement on June 29, 1971, reported in the London *Times*, June 30, 1971).

In practice the American people have had to suffer both continuance of the war and mass unemployment.

Electoral Calculations

In these conditions the timetable of the operation of the business cycle is too unpredictable to suit the requirements of the short-term calculations of the political leaders of modern capitalism. Hence they substitute fantasy pictures of a glowing future capitalist paradise in the hope to turn back the mass anger and resistance of the working people against the burdens which their rulers are placing on them to meet the real requirements of capitalism. Thus the picture of an approaching capitalist paradise is not an economic prediction, but a would-be political weapon. In this presidential election year in the US it is a transparent electoral gimmick, as Nixon snatches at every contradictory watchword and panacea in the hope of overcoming the unpopularity of his policies. The same verbal jugglery is performed by the Tory Government in Britain, with the unabashed 'success' sales talk of Heath and Barber and Carr to cover up the bankruptcy of their policies in the field of unemployment and seek to retrieve their falling political stock for a future election.

'Facts of Life'

There is of course more than electoral flapdoodle in the 'success' talk of a Nixon and a Heath in the midst of a ravaged economy. For the privileged sections of monopoly capitalism able to take advantage, there have been high profits through capital gains in 1971, and a 'bull market' for shares is predicted for 1972. 'Most people would regard 1971 as a stinker, but not investors. It was a very good year'

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(*Observer Business News*, December 19, 1971). The Labour MP Michael Meacher calculated in the *Times* on December 29, 1971, that since the return of the Tory Government in June 1970 the wealthiest 350,000 of the population had won, in addition to tax relief gains worth £1,258 extra per person per year for those earning over £100 a week, an increase in the market value of their shares equal to a gross capital gain of £36,000 each since the election, or after allowing for the gains tax rate a net capital gain per person of £25,000, if realised. Evidently it was well worth while for these top people to invest cash for a Tory election victory in June 1970. When President Nixon was challenged with reference to his incomes and prices freeze of 90 days proclaimed in August last year, and carried forward through his 'Phase Two' formulation into 1972, he was asked why no restraint was imposed on profits. He replied:

> Many of my good friends have advised me that the only politically popular position to take is to be against profits. But let us recognise an unassailable fact of life. All Americans will benefit from more profits (*Times*, October 8, 1971).

That is one version of the 'facts of life' for 1971, and the true substance underlying the sunshine success stories.

Real Facts of Life

But the real record of success and failure by the measure of the world situation in 1971 is very different. 1971 was the year of the decisive change in the world balance since the end of the war. It was a year of heavy reverses for the old social order and victory for socialism and the advance of the peoples. 1971 was the year of the downfall of the dollar. 1971 saw the break-up of the American domination in the capitalist world which had been maintained through a variety of economic, political and military forms since 1945. 1971 saw the final defeat of the policy maintained for 22 years to boycott and isolate the Chinese People's Republic. 1971 saw the conspicuous defeat of the US in the UN Assembly over its 'two Chinas' policy. 1971 revealed to all, including to the American people, the bankruptcy of the war of aggression conducted by the American rulers in South East Asia, and all the final rearguard actions of brutal barbarity and intensified bombardment and devastation have not been able to conceal the reality of this defeat. 1971 saw the overwhelming defeat of the US-financed and armed satellite military regime of General Yahya in West Pakistan, endeavouring first to crush the people of Bangladesh with unlimited mass slaughter and atrocities, and then, having failed

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to break their resistance, to open a direct war of aggression against India, hoping by military gains in the West to make good the defeat in the East. This shameful war was conducted with the direct support of the top shapers of American policy, as revealed in the documents now disclosed of Nixon and Kissinger in relation to this war. 1971 saw the world capitalist economy torn with deeper conflicts and contradictions than at any time since 1945, with the collapse of the Bretton Woods agreement, the open battle of currencies, and the unstable patchwork of the Washington Monetary Agreement at the end of the year, recognised on all sides as unlikely to provide a lasting settlement or solution.

Advance of Socialism and the Peoples

Very different is the record of 1971 in relation to socialism and the advance of the peoples. The signal for 1971 was set by the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, revealing once again, at a higher level than ever, the strength of the socialist economic system, immune from the crisis rocking the capitalist world, and able to set in the Ninth Five Year Plan concrete objectives, which will be realised, for advance in every sphere of social well-being, alongside an inspiring international programme for the promotion of peace and the independence of the peoples. 1971 saw the emblem of the sickle and hammer implanted on the planet Mars. 1971 saw the international recognition of the full legal rights of the Chinese People's Republic in the United Nations, a historic victory for socialism, irrespective of the temporary problems arising from current policies contrary to the interests of China as a socialist country, and entangling China in co-operation with US imperialism in reactionary policies such as the support of the butcher General Yahya in West Pakistan, in opposition to the majority of socialist countries and world progressive opinion. 1971 saw the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty as a factor for a political settlement on the basis of the UN decisions in the present dangerous and explosive situation in the Middle East, countering the attempts of successive high-powered American agents to make a deal with reactionary elements in the Arab world in order to disrupt the Arab liberation movement, and promoting the aim of anti-imperialist unity in the cause of Arab liberation.

Peoples' Victory and Moves for Peace

1971 saw the Soviet-Indian Treaty as a powerful factor for the future of peace in southern Asia. When the US-financed and armed

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satellite military regime let loose its war against India, the swift victory of India against the aggression of the American satellite strengthened the conditions for the future maintenance of peace in southern Asia. 1971 saw the victory of the sovereign independence of Bangladesh, whose people, advancing from their grim previous ordeal and heroic struggle and facing today with the same courage no less arduous tasks of reconstruction, have earned the right to go forward as a proud and welcome partner in the community of progressive nations and states. 1971 saw the working class in movement in all the countries of capitalism, with a wide extension of strikes and active political struggles. 1971 saw in Europe, the old hot-bed of two world wars, the beginning of new policies to overcome previous inflexible cold war divisions and turn towards an East-West détente, with the Four Power Agreement on West Berlin, the Treaties of Federal Germany with the Soviet Union and Poland, strengthened French-Soviet co-operation and support for the aim of a European Security Conference. The gladiators of cold war reaction, still strongly entrenched in the British Tory Government, have found themselves compelled to pay lip service to the aim of a European Security Conference, while trying in every way to block and delay it in practice. Thus the key battles are still in front. But the achievements of 1971 have prepared the conditions for new landmarks of advance in 1972.

Where Now is 'The American Century'?

In February 1941 the American magazine *Life* gave wide circulation to an article by its publisher Henry R. Luce, entitled 'The American Century', which proposed that the US should take over world leadership on the basis of its vast power. This was not an erratic expression, but characteristic of a phase. In 1946 Leo D. Welch, Secretary-Treasurer of the Standard Oil Company in New Jersey proclaimed the aim in an address to the National Foriegn Trade Convention in business terms:

> As the largest producer, the largest source of capital and the biggest contributor to the global mechanism, we must set the pace and assume the responsibility of the majority stockholder in this corporation known as the world.... Nor is this for a given term of office. This is a permanent occupation.

Already in December 1940 the President of the National Industrial Conference Board of the US, Virgil Jordan, in an address to the Investment Bankers Association of America had proclaimed: 'The sceptre passes to the United States.' A hundred similar declarations

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could be quoted from the period. They revealed the widespread conception of leading Western political spokesmen at the time of the second world war and during the years immediately following that the future epoch of world history will be an epoch of American world leadership—'the American Century'. Where is that 'American Century' today? Even in the limited sense of domination of the countries of the capitalist world, it lasted less than a quarter of a century, and we have witnessed its conspicuous downfall during the past year.

Illusions of Omnipotence

To measure the distance travelled today from the conception of the world situation as seen by the strategists of the cold war and American world domination, including the ruling spokesmen in the satellite countries, just two decades ago, it is only necessary to recall what the London *Times* editorial on August 29, 1951, could describe as the power-structure of the world after the second world war:

> Over two thirds of the globe along the great arc stretching from Europe to Japan, no treaty can be signed, no decision can be made, without the approval and support of the US Government. Only the great Communist bloc is impervious (*Times*, August 29, 1951).

This was not an expression of protest at such domination of a single Government in the capitalist world, or a demand for a change. It was the unquestioning 'realist' view of the world situation as seen by all the official spokesmen of the rulers of the leading countries of the capitalist world two decades ago.

A Marxist Prediction

In contrast to this perspective of American invincible domination over all the countries of the capitalist world may be set the insight of Marxism at the time into the inner contradictions and future break-down of this system, as set out in the prediction of Stalin in 1952 in his last work *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* (which, whatever grounds for criticism there may be for some of the judgments expressed in it, contained also some penetrating insights):

> Outwardly, everything would seem to be 'going well'; the US has put Western Europe, Japan and other capitalist countries on rations; Germany (Western), Britain, France, Italy and Japan have fallen into the clutches of the US and are meekly obeying its commands. But it would be mistaken to think that things can continue to 'go well' for 'all eternity', that these countries will tolerate the domination and oppression of the United States endlessly, that

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> they will not endeavour to tear loose from American bondage and take the path of independent development.
>
> Take, first of all, Britain and France. Undoubtedly they are imperialist countries. Undoubtedly, cheap raw materials and secure markets are of paramount importance to them. Can it be assumed that they will endlessly tolerate the present situation in which, under the guise of 'Marshall Plan aid', Americans are penetrating into the economies of Britain and France and trying to convert them into adjuncts of the United States economy? ... Would it not be truer to say that capitalist Britain, and, after her, capitalist France will be compelled in the end to break from the embrace of the US and enter into conflict with it in order to secure an independent position, and of course high profits?

The events of 1971, with the collapse of the dollar and American domination in the capitalist world, has abundantly confirmed the essential truth underlying this prediction, whatever the variations in the way the details have worked out.

Lost Dreams of World Domination

The US is still the strongest capitalist state today, equally in wealth, productive power and armed might, and still maintains its vast system of overseas expansion with bases in countries all over the capitalist world. But the situation of American unquestioned domination in the capitalist world was a short-lived temporary phase arising from the special conditions at the end of the second world war. Already before the end of the nineteenth century the US was the foremost capitalist country in industrial and productive development, but was still a debtor; financial supremacy rested with London. After the first world war President Wilson made the first attempt to establish American world leadership through the League of Nations; but the attempt was premature in relation to the situation in Europe, and the Senate turned it down, since control would have had to be shared. Subsequent intervention in Europe through the Dawes Plan and Young Plan broke down with the world economic crisis. It was only through the second world war, which left the European countries devastated while piling up astronomical profits for the US without any damage to its territory, that the special conditions arose for the temporary phase of American domination in the capitalist world.

Empire of Anti-Communism

The war-time agreements of the Governments of the victorious anti-fascist coalition at Teheran, the Crimea and Potsdam provided for continued co-operation of the partnership after the war. But the

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rulers of American imperialism, in close association with reactionary elements in Britain and West Europe, scenting their opportunity, repudiated these agreements and chose instead the cold war strategy of division, by which, in the name of anti-communism, they took on the organisation of the countries of the capitalist world under American leadership. In this way was built up the new American empire with economic and political penetration and military bases established all over the world. This position of strategic power, together with the belief that they possessed an invincible weapon on the basis of nuclear monopoly, led to the dream that they could impose their will on the socialist world, and thus reorganise the whole world under the leadership of American imperialism. This was the conception of the Baruch Plan and the Truman-Dulles era with the slogans of 'rolling back the tide of communism' to end the socialist regime in the new socialist countries and even, finally, to bring down communism in the Soviet Union. Such was the temporary special phase of imaginary omnipotence which lasted for only a short term of years and gave rise to the illusion of 'the American Century'—until the Sputnik finally pricked the illusion.

Delusions of Grandeur

The illusions of invincible power went to the heads of many American ruling statesmen and politicians in the years immediately after the second world war and during the early fifties. In 1954 Congress added the word 'God' to the oath of allegiance to the US, to run henceforth: 'I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.' This was the McCarthy era to terrorise ordinary citizens into conformity. In 1953 a report of the local paper in the capital of Wisconsin (the State for which McCarthy was Senator) showed a plain copy of the Declaration of Independence to people in the street, asking them to sign it if they agreed with it: of 112 persons with whom he spoke, one signed it; the other 111 declared it 'too radical', 'subversive' or 'communist-inspired'. In 1950 the Secretary of the Navy Matthews declared, in a speech at Boston on August 26, that they should be ready to 'institute a war to compel co-operation for peace' and thereby through 'the initiation of a war of aggression win for us a proud and popular title—we would become the first aggressors for peace' (the formula was subsequently repudiated as undiplomatic by President Truman, but had been cleared by Defence Secretary Johnson). The US Defence Secretary Forrestal in 1949 went mad while

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holding his office. The radio commentator Drew Pearson broadcast the account on April 10, 1949:

> Mr James Forrestal is out of his mind and has apparently been partly so for some weeks. . . . Mr Forrestal became obsessed with the idea that the Russians were invading the United States, and when a fire siren blew he jumped out of bed and had to be restrained. Later the siren blew a second time and Mr Forrestal then ran out of the house in his pyjamas screaming about the Red Army and it was with some difficulty that he was caught and brought back into the house. . . . It is hoped that important decisions made while he was possibly not in his right mind will be reviewed.

The significant feature of this episode is not that the US Defence Secretary went mad while exercising his vast powers in putting through the colossal rearmament programme in the US and the satellite countries and developing Nato, but that he had already been mad for weeks while operating these policies, and no one had noticed anything wrong.

President Nixon's Schizophrenia

It is the ruinous inheritance of the breakdown of all these past policies of illusions of American omnipotence which President Nixon has had to shoulder to try to find answers to the new situation of today. He himself had played no small part in the promotion of these ruinous policies when he inaugurated his political career as a ruthless exponent of McCarthyism and a voice of the militarists for strong measures to destroy the resistance of the people of Vietnam. When he came to power he had to face a situation in which the breakdown of these policies and emergence of new forces had created a crisis for future American policy at home and abroad. Korea and Vietnam had exploded the illusions of omnipotence. Vietnam had broken President Johnson. France had cleared out the American forces, and all the major capitalist countries were advancing in relative strength. The aim of parity had had to replace the previous aim of military superiority in relation to the Soviet Union. China had successfully resisted every blockade and pressure. The dollar was rocking. Internally the US was divided and rent with a hundred new forms of revolt among wide sections of the population. President Nixon had no profound political philosophy to comprehend and master these complexities. But he was a pragmatist. He desired to achieve quick results. Hence a bewildering succession of contradictory formulas and policies has flowed in an endless series as he has tried to have resort to one expedient after another.

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A Kaleidoscope of Policy

In his State of the Union message in January 1971 President Nixon proclaimed his 'New American Revolution', and in his subsequent economic statement explained his 'expansionary public economic policy' of deficit-financing to achieve 'prosperity without inflation'. The money supply was increased by 9 per cent in the first quarter of 1971, while Nixon declared opposition to imposing any system of restraint on incomes and prices. By the summer of 1971 the dangerous signs of inflationary weakening of the dollar led to the draconian offensive of the August 15 declaration, ending gold convertibility of the dollar and, imposing the imports surcharge and other protectionist measures, while at the same time he imposed the 90 day freeze on incomes and prices, carried forward by the phase two formula into 1972. In the sphere of foreign policy he had won the election with a pledge to end the war in Vietnam and bring the troops home. Instead, he enlarged the war into Laos and Cambodia. When the South Vietnam Provisional Revolutionary Government's Seven Point Peace Plan of July 1 offered moderate proposals for a settlement including the return of all American prisoners of war, conditional on a definite date for the withdrawal of invading troops, and influential American press organs were clamouring for a positive answer, Nixon attempted to cover up his silence on this peace plan by the counter-stroke of launching on July 15 the thunderbolt of announcing his plan to visit Peking. But the impression created of a one-sided strategy of alignment with China to divide the socialist world led to a subsequent attempt to counter this impression by announcing a plan to visit Moscow in May after Peking in February. This announcement of a bilateral 'Summit Meeting' in Moscow aroused suspicions in the minds of other Nato members, and so compelled a series of further meetings to reassure the leaders of the principal Nato governments and Japan. In this succession of policies and expedients there were also positive results achieved; US pressure helped to compel British Toryism to accept the Four-Power Agreement on West Berlin; and the Salt talks and a series of minor agreements with the Soviet Union bearing on nuclear weapons and strategy opened the way towards possibilities of a serious approach on the urgent questions of reduction of armaments, both nuclear and general. But over the immediate vital world issue of the war in Indo-China Nixon, while continuing to proclaim the aim of withdrawal, has so far in fact, in the name of 'Vietnamisation', intensified the air war with the most deadly new weapons for the bombardment and devastation of the Vietnam People's Republic.

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Washington Monetary Agreement Contradictions

The Washington Monetary Agreement of the Finance Ministers of the Group of Ten in December 1971, which brought a formal truce in the open war of currencies since the American offensive of August 15, has been hailed as a triumph for stabilisation (or even in the characteristic Nixonian phrase 'the most significant monetary agreement in the history of the world'). It might rather be termed a highly unstable truce between simultaneously co-operating and rival partners in crime. The 'Group of Ten' is constituted by the ten wealthiest capitalist countries which hold 57 per cent of the votes in the International Monetary Fund, thus outweighing the other 108 members. Against their domination has been formed the 'Group of Seventy-Seven', the association constituted at the conference at Lima in Peru last October to represent the 'Third World', countries whose economies have been subjected to the superior strength of exploitation exercised by the wealthy countries of the Group of Ten, and have in consequence had to carry the burden of every crisis affecting the wealthy countries. The conflict of currencies which came to such a head in 1971 had already developed sharply since 1968, when the French banking representatives and the Bank of England had endeavoured to compel a drastic devaluation of the dollar to increase its gold price by 100-200 per cent, but had been compelled in face of American resistance to agree to the two-tier system by which the free market price of gold was separated from the fixed US price which was to be maintained between central banks. The failure of this dual system to solve the problem was proved by the events of 1971. The currency battle between the wealthy capitalist countries during the second half of 1971 was a battle between partners, since all of them held on the basis of Bretton Woods the main proportion of their currency reserves in dollars (33 billion dollars, alongside gold valued at 22 billion dollars), and were therefore concerned to save the dollar from collapse. On the other hand, they could not but resist the American demand that the crisis of the dollar should be met by up-valuing their currencies instead of devaluing the dollar in terms of its gold price, since this would mean a heavy loss for them through all their dollar reserves falling in value in terms of their own currency. But the US finance-capitalists held the whiphand with the simultaneous weapon of the imports surcharge and the threat of a radical devaluation or even cancellation of the gold value of the dollar. Hence at the very last moment the American concession of a token devaluation of the dollar in terms of gold by 8.8 per cent (the Roose-

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veltian devaluation in 1934 had been 41 per cent, and had aroused the declaration of the Budget Director Douglas: 'This is the end of Western civilisation'), from the 1934 figure of $35 for an ounce of gold, which had for so long been rigidly upheld like the Ark of the Covenant, to $38, ensured that the final deal fixing the new exchange rates was on the whole favourable to the US.

Dangers in the Economic Prospect

The conception of stability of the new exchange rates is likely to prove illusory. But the immediate burden of the new rates will fall heavily upon the working people of all the countries which have accepted the price of saving the dollar by facilitating the export of dollar goods at cheaper levels in terms of their local currencies, while increasing the prices of their own products. The adverse effects will be especially marked for Britain, because they coincide with the plan of the Tory Government to impose the already heavy costs of bull-dozing Britain into the Common Market. 'This could mean that there would have to be another shift soon, with the pound devalued a year after we join the Common Market' (*Guardian*, December 20, 1971). The communiqué of the Group of Ten spoke about the Monetary Agreement 'assuring a new and lasting equilibrium in the international economy'. But, as the *Economist* of December 25 commented (under the title 'The Dirty Fixing'): 'Unless one makes the odd assumption that all rates of inflation between all countries will always be equal ever after as from midnight last Saturday, "lasting equilibrium" and fixed exchange rates have to be a contradiction in terms. . . . The most important point about the new pattern of world exchange rates is that it will not last long.' In this ceaseless switchback ride of the money-changers, for which the workers always have to pay, so long as the economy is left in the hands of these gentlemen, the most important immediate practical conclusion for working people in Britain is to intensify the fight for living standards, centred today in the fight of the miners, and to increase in every way the pressure of the mass campaign to prevent the ruinous costly step of Britain being forced into the Common Market.

Critical Testing Time

Hence the outlook for 1972 is one of intense and critical battles both in Britain and internationally. In Britain the national miners' strike, which has opened at the moment of writing these words, is concentrating the class confrontation and test of strength and working class solidarity which will govern the whole prospect ahead.

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The battle deepens over the aim of the Tory Government, taking advantage of the Tory allies in the parliamentary representation of the labour movement who saved Heath from defeat on October 28, to bulldoze Britain without electoral mandate into the Common Market, and to force through the operation of the Industrial Relations Act. This situation calls for the most serious consideration to be given on the readiness for the battle, both in the trade unions and in the political labour movement. In the trade unions there are problems of division to be overcome. In the political labour movement it is necessary to recognise that there is a dangerous challenge which hinders the effectiveness of the fight against the Tory offensive. Alongside the continued operation of the measures of division which hamper the co-operation of all fighting for socialism and the cause of the working class, there is the maintenance in leading positions of those who proclaim the right to flout democratic decisions in order to vote with the Tories in conditions where their vote saves the Tory Government. It is here that the trade unions, which founded the Labour Party, and on whose support these allies of the Tories in fact depend, have the most responsible role to play, to correct this situation in the parliamentary representation, restore democratic functioning and compel the carrying out of decisions of the organised working class movement and removal of any representatives who refuse to accept this indispensable basis. On this vital question for the whole future of the labour movement Dick Seabrook writes his statement of views this month under the title 'Trade Unions and the Labour Party'. Internationally the present testing time calls on us to respond to the new moves and possibilities for advance from the old inheritance of the cold war towards East-West co-operation; to defeat the resistance of the still strongly entrenched warriors of the cold war and reaction, led by the British Tory Government, seeking to hinder and block such advance; and to mobilise the widest and most representative strength of mass support for the achievement of the earliest convening of the European Security Conference.

R.P.D.

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TRADE UNIONS AND THE LABOUR PARTY

Dick Seabrook*
President
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

THE Heath Government is in office today by kind permission of the 69 Labour MPs who voted with the Government—and the 20 who abstained—in the vote on October 28 to decide for or against entry into the Common Market. No amount of argument, of white-wash or appeals to conscience should blind the labour movement to this fact. It was a black day indeed. In 1931, when Ramsay MacDonald and his crew deserted the ranks, they were seen openly and clearly to have joined the other side. Today those responsible for continued Tory Government in this country remain within the ranks of the Parliamentary Party, and their main spokesman, with 140 votes, is re-elected Deputy-Leader. If these people had wanted to destroy confidence in the use of the parliamentary method to bring about changes in our society, they could hardly have chosen a more convincing demonstration. It is not now merely a question of defeating the Marketeers this year, it is also one of finding a way to restore confidence in the labour movement, and among the people generally, that the fight to defeat this Government and secure a new Labour Government is worth undertaking, that it can be done successfully without waiting passively for the next election, and that the results in terms of policy by the next Labour Government will vindicate all the effort and energy required to make the change.

It is an intolerable situation. Trade unionists already beginning to feel the first impacts of the Industrial Relations Act; students resisting the intentions of the Government to bring their unions under strict supervision and control; the unemployed, signing on and watching their families deprived of food and clothes and goods and services to which as citizens they are entitled; tenants preparing to fight back against proposals which will mean huge rent increases; parents angry at the loss by their schoolchildren of free milk; future complainants about the burdens of Value Added Tax, and a host of others boiling with resentment at the effect of some aspect of policy or decision or intention of this Government, will continue to condemn the 69 for their betrayal of the movement and for their

* Opening discussion in a series of *Labour Monthly* articles on 'Trade Unions and the Labour Party', Dick Seabrook writes here in his individual capacity.

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flouting of Conference, Parliamentary Party, Executive Committee, Shadow Cabinet and TUC decisions all to oppose entry.

The Government could have been stopped short in its tracks. Made to come to the country on an issue where it does not have the support of a majority of the electorate, made to face the consequences of the full range of all its other policies, it could have been given a resounding defeat enabling the country to set out on an entirely new course. October 28, 1971, a date of significance in the history of the Parliamentary Labour Party and of the British labour movement as the day when Heath was rescued by the defection of a large part of the Parliamentary Party, could instead have been the day when the most reactionary Tory Government in modern times was driven from office, and a new era of economic, social and political advance commenced in this country.

The monstrous absurdity that, once elected, the Parliamentary Party and a Labour Cabinet is not answerable to those who sponsored them, fought for them and decided their policy must be ended once and for all. By far the largest proportion of the Party's national finances—something like four-fifths—is provided by trade union affiliation fees. In any other walk of life to take the money and refuse to deliver the goods would render one liable to prosecution for conspiracy to defraud! Trade unionists are getting fed-up with being regarded as the milch cow. The contrast is frequently drawn between the way this Tory Government has from the start followed policies benefiting its friends and supporters, rushing through in addition measures which are changing the structure and functioning of our society in their favour, and the way successive policies of the last Labour Government steadily drove more and more of their would-be supporters into increasingly critical opposition to it, leading towards the head-on collision with the entire trade union movement which was so narrowly averted in 1969.

Disillusioned by the disappointments and defeats suffered at the hands of the 1964-70 Labour Government, workers turned to their trade unions with increased determination to restore by direct action the drop in living standards imposed upon them by the Government's pursuit—at their expense—of the 'favourable balance of trade' policy. In contrast to the Labour Party's drop in membership, votes and number of candidates elected, the trade unions emerged from this period with greatly increased strength in terms of members and unity of organisation, and achieved real improvements in standards of living for their members and for all workers. The situation in 1971 was vastly different from what it was in 1931. In

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1931 the TUC had an affiliated membership of 3,750,000; in 1971 it had an affiliated membership of over ten million, nearly another half-century of knowledge and experience to guide it, and new leaders many of whom are showing themselves much more responsive to the demands of their members and of the times in which we live. It is, of course, precisely because of this growing strength and success that one of the first acts of the present Government in coming to office has been to rush through the Industrial Relations Act in order to undermine, weaken and split the unions and prevent them continuing the advances already begun.

In this situation therefore the role of the unions, and their relationship with the Labour Party, and the Parliamentary Party's attitude to decisions taken by the movement as a whole are of decisive importance for the future improvement in living and working conditions of the entire British people, and for the advance to socialism. The whole question needs serious re-examination in order to avoid in future the mistakes and attitudes which have had such disastrous consequences in the past.

Nineteen seventy-one saw some other significant developments. For the first time for many years, in response to the call of the TUC hundreds of thousands of trade unionists and others came out on to the streets in protest against the Industrial Relations Bill, against the continued rise in unemployment, and for a rapid and substantial improvement in retirement pensions. In all these actions trade union and Party leaderships marched together locally as well as nationally. The bold and courageous action of the UCS workers in occupying their yards rather than accept meekly the decision to throw thousands of them out of work, gave a new dimension to the fight for full employment; their example was followed by the Plessey workers at Alexandria, and already in 1972 by the workers at Allis Chalmers at Mold in Flintshire, and the Fisher Bendix workers at Kirkby, Liverpool. How long will it be before the idea penetrates the minds of many thousands/millions of workers in Britain that control of the whole economy by themselves is a possibility?

'The Government is struggling, the Opposition is split . . . the trade unions are impotent,' said the Political Editor of the *Financial Times* reviewing 1971 in that paper on December 31. It is a challenge which must be taken up. More and more people throughout the world are turning to socialism for the solution of their problems, joining that vast number constituting well over half the world's population who, in one form or another, depending on their own circumstances, have already taken that road, some—as in Chile—showing great

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courage in face of all the hostile internal and external forces at work against them. Do we in Britain have less courage than these others? History lends no support to such an idea. Are genuinely socialist policies inappropriate to our time and circumstances? On the contrary. Unless moves are quickly made in the direction of more public ownership and more control over their affairs by the people themselves, the rate at which we are moving towards some form of corporate state may require at a later stage hardships and sacrifices much greater than the effort demanded now to halt and reverse this process.

Events have forced upon the unions a responsibility, which cannot be dodged or shed, of helping to find the right answers to the many and difficult questions presenting themselves at this stage. In the discussions now beginning between representatives of the TUC and of the Labour Party, copper-bottomed guarantees must be secured that the programme once agreed upon will be fought for without hesitancy or reservation, inside the House and in the country, bringing the full strength of the entire movement into the campaign. To the extent that the unions help in achieving this, will they qualify for that enhanced role in the society of the future which we are now demanding for them.

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NO POLITICAL MIDDLE ROAD

Richard Briginshaw

General Secretary
National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants*

THERE is no part of our life that is not affected by politics. The Government is responsible for the great increase in unemployment in Britain. Their policies have created the increase in workless people. They are openly and unashamedly working *conservative doctrinaire politics, the politics of capitalism.* They have openly shifted and cut social benefits from the middle and poor workers to the advantage of the well off and rich.

That is politics. They could say that is why the capitalists wanted the Tories elected. They, the Tories, had to undermine through their control of mass media the Labour Government. The Tories could say, we had some of our men working from the inside on this task. They sought to confuse public opinion by attacking the trade unions. They never missed a day in ten years without finding or manufacturing some error, some misdeed by a trade unionist worker. Sinister financial trickery was used to confuse the Wilson Government. They used sinister methods in finding a basis for press attacks on trade union leaders at all levels. All this to forward their efforts as a bunch of capitalistic robber barons to regain open political power.

We need to get the present Tory Government out. They are not strongly entrenched; it is a denial of democracy to leave them alone for three or five years—that way means disaster for Britain and particularly so for British workers. Our ruling establishment is conscious of the dangers of a new general election to them. Desperately they seek to confuse the electorate. All the pundits and press prostitutes are on to the line of seeking to undermine labour movement unity by plugging the outworn hoax of the so-called middle ground of politics. They ask us to beware of upsetting the middle-of-the-roaders in the electorate. They are seeking to sell us the fatal poison dose that undid the Wilson Governments.

Harold Wilson went down to temporary defeat because he listened to these Siren voices. So desperate did his Government colleagues become to keep the so-called middle-of-the-road, and the supposed middle-roaders, that they lost the support of their *own* electors and friends. The real labour movement was demoralised. The Tories came

* By courtesy of Mr Briginshaw we publish this arti le which has also appeared in the Natsopa *Journal.*

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in by default. This must not happen again. The Tories have polarised the political situation openly; they removed the threadbare clothes used by the mass media to defend the capitalist establishment and hide the reality of capitalist class rule. The Tories have disclosed the reality of the political situation in Britain. There is no middle ground or middle-of-the-roader—it is a myth, a fantasy, a hoax—you name it.

The Parliamentary Labour Party cannot continue their independent principality status, divorced from the main line upsurge in our movement and from democratic conference decisions. 'Favourite sons' elite-ism supported by the establishment press has received a blow at the hands of the best in the Parliamentary Labour Party, not just the 'lefts', in the voting for a Deputy Leader. The national interests and the fundamental well-being of the labour movement needed a more definite and harder blow.

The real situation is the mass of the British people, mainly gainfully employed or designated that way, plus the best of the professional and managerial people, our scientists, our technicians, versus a tiny but powerful monopolistic capitalist ruling establishment. The whole set-up at the top, through the large commercial and business groups, plus the insurance investing so-called institutions, is run and controlled by a few thousand men. It is 53 million people versus maybe 5,000 rulers. Fantastic? Let anyone look through the cross sharing and investments of the 'institutions' and who controls them, and it can quickly be seen that it is no fantasy. Modern Britain needs, politically and socially, an end to this freebooter control of our country. Let us subordinate the institutions and our ruling establishment to the democratic power of the people—people's power. A Labour Government that says it will do this, and *does* do it, will prove that such a policy will suit the great majority of the British people; *the so-called middle-class voters will always follow a definite and bold political lead by the modern British working class expressing itself through a united labour movement—so clearly expressed in modern classic fashion by the UCS workers' struggle.*

The Tories, with disgusting arrogance, have opened a class war. Let's take them on and dispose of them electorally once and for all. *There is no middle ground. Everyone who peddles the idea is a HOAXER.*

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EUROPEAN SECURITY PROSPECTS

Charles Dukes

UNDOUBTEDLY 1972 will be decisive for the forces of peace. The planned International Assembly of the Peoples of Europe in Brussels will provide considerable impetus to the campaign for a European Security Conference. Moreover the agreement concluded late last year between the Governments of the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic regarding transit traffic between West Germany and West Berlin, as well as the arrangement between the GDR Government and the West Berlin Senate on facilitating traffic conditions, indicate tacit first-time ever recognition of the GDR, as a sovereign state by the Federal Republic.

Admittedly ratification of these agreements within the overall framework of the Four Power Agreement on West Berlin of September 3, 1971, must still be gained. However even the *Times*—known for its animosity towards the GDR—commented at the time that 'recognition of the GDR must come'.

And yet no one should be misled into assuming that all problems have been resolved. Willy Brandt's 'Ostpolitik'—whilst setting new standards in Bonn's outward approach and political terminology—certainly doesn't signify that West Germany has broken with Nato and is now imbued with feelings of friendship towards the GDR. The recorded results indicate, at best, that leading political circles in West Germany today accept the fact—notwithstanding consistent pin-pricks from the right—that questions of mutual interest to both German states can only be resolved through negotiations. A welcome step forward from the cold war jargon of the Adenauer-Foster Dulles era!

West Germany's right wing led by the chancellor candidate of the opposition Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Rainer Barzel, is moving might and main to reverse this trend. Even some of the Bonn Government's most ardent supporters, among them the Minister of the Interior Genscher, have again joined the reactionary chorus about a so-called special 'inner-German relationship' between both German states in the interests of the 'unity of the nation'. This contention is used as an excuse to deny proper diplomatic recognition to the GDR and in order to discourage other states, above all the Nato countries, from taking such an obviously beneficial step in the interests of European security.

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Historically the two German states were founded more than 20 years ago under totally differing circumstances. The Federal Republic, boosted by Marshall Aid, developed along monopoly capitalist lines; the GDR expropriated and placed on trial the war criminals and, back in 1952, began the construction of socialism.

Clearly all such talk about an alleged 'unity' of the two German states is a myth designed to lull the peoples into accepting, by implication, that the GDR is only a temporary political phenomenon with whom it is not worth while to establish official diplomatic ties. As regards 'inner-German relations'—how on earth can such ties be maintained between states with diametrically opposing social systems? Forces purporting the contrary can have but one aim, namely the overthrow of the socialist social system in the GDR. And it is an open secret, as repeatedly underlined by the Warsaw Treaty states, that any such effort would provoke a military conflagration resulting in the rebuff of reaction.

Real conditions require—in the interests of European Security —that all states, and included here are both West Germany and the Western powers, unreservedly accept the sovereign existence of the GDR on a par with Western Germany. Moreover the GDR, situated in the heart of Europe, must be given full facilities to participate, on an equal footing, in the preparations for a European Security Conference and in the conference itself.

Anything less than this would represent a decisive toppling of the cart in favour of the opponents of détente. Significantly only one of the two German states, the German Democratic Republic, in a Government statement circulated as an official document of the UN General Assembly last November, has expressed, as its foremost task, 'to contribute towards creating the prerequisites for a system of collective security and universal peaceful co-operation in Europe as essential elements of international security.'

Denying diplomatic recognition to such a state, notwithstanding that the GDR today maintains diplomatic ties with 30 countries and is now a member of over 500 international organisations, may be Nato policy; but such an approach evidently ignores the interests of the peoples who justly desire a peaceful solution of all European problems.

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FREE MILK FOR 7-11 YEAR OLDS

Alderman G. M. Donovan
Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil

LAST month Merthyr Tydfil stood alone as the only local education authority in Great Britain to continue the supply of free milk to the 7 to 11 year old schoolchildren.

From what is understood we were the sole survivors of the authorities who had taken a stand against Education Minister Margaret Thatcher's iniquitous Milk Act, and although we had been warned that we were probably acting illegally and faced the likelihood of surcharge, disqualification and other legal consequences we were as determined as ever to continue to provide free milk to our junior schoolchildren. Basically we view the provision of milk to younger children as essential during the formative years, a preventive medicine —especially in our area which was once scourged by tuberculosis and where many of our children suffered from under-nourishment and rickets. As a very 'education-conscious' local authority we viewed the milk as a contributing factor to an investment in our manhood, an investment in the future of our country.

Unfortunately our Borough Treasurer, strongly influenced we believe by a government department, refused to sign any more cheques for the payment of the milk under question—legally we were blocked. We were unable to carry out a *local* decision to spend *local* ratepayers' monies to provide milk for our *own* schoolchildren. So much for the Tory pre-election statements of giving local authorities more control over their own affairs.

The present position is that Merthyr Tydfil will provide the junior schoolchildren with fruit milk-shakes, for which a charge *has* to be made. Our charge will be a minimum 2½p per child per week. Although this is a token charge it is alien to our principles and a further erosion of the services created under the welfare state.

Our position is not one of defeat, but of a nature of a temporary set-back. We are confident that the issue of free milk to our schoolchildren will be resumed, although probably for this to happen we shall have to await the return of a socialist Government at the next general election.

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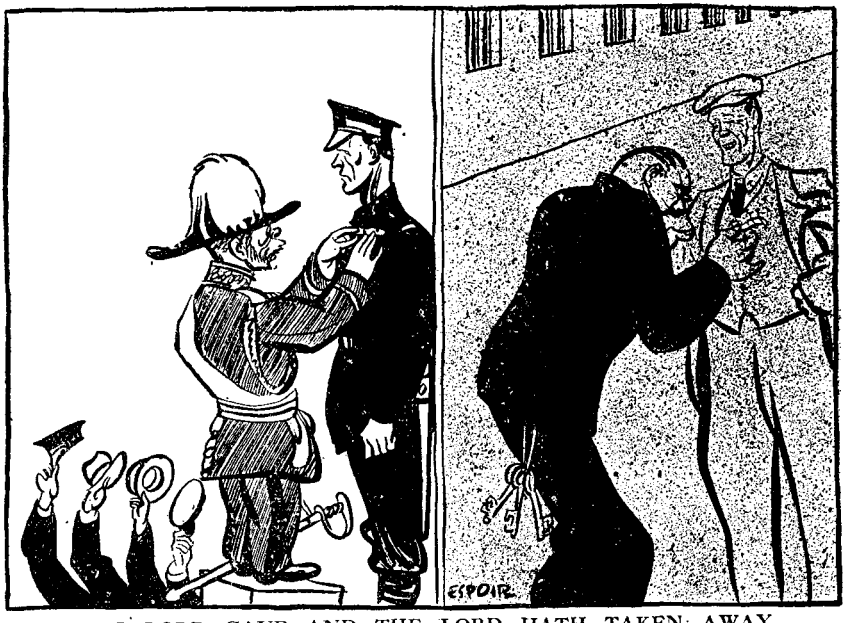
FROM POPLA

Alderman Donovan's statement (p. 71) on the situation in Merthyr Tydfil, and the staunchness of the Merthyr councillors who had previously declared their readiness to go to jail if this would ensure the continued supply of milk to the schoolchildren, recall the days of 1921 in Poplar. The 'Espoir' cartoon below appeared in the *Communist* of October 1, 1921, over a caption which noted that 'C. E. Williams, one of the thirty Poplar Councillors gaoled for refusing to leave the unemployed to starve, was stripped of his war decorations in Brixton Gaol'. At that time borough councils were forced to levy 'precepts' —part of the local rates which were passed on to outside authorities (largely in this case the London County Council). The Poplar councillors had declared in March 1921 that the rates in Poplar, necessarily high to provide finance for the relief work of their Board of Guardians, would no longer be inflated by these 'precepts'. If the LCC wanted the money they could collect it themselves.

Guilty and Proud of It! appeared as a pamphlet in the continued struggle on behalf of the unemployed following their victorious release in October. We print opposite an extract from it, and another from an article by George Lansbury, whose name is forever associated with 'Poplarism'.



THE LORD GAVE AND THE LORD, HATH TAKEN AWAY.

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TO MERTHYR

GUILTY
AND PROUD OF IT!

POPLAR'S ANSWER

PRICE TWOPENCE

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During these years, the poor and the needy, the sick and the infirm, the fatherless, the widows and the orphans have been properly and decently treated. The spirit of Bumble has been driven out and supplanted by the spirit of humanity. This work has cost money, but the people of Poplar have steadily supported the view that the duty of members of the Board of Guardians is to be Guardians of the POOR and not Guardians of the interests of property. In Poplar there is no cringing or whining on the part of those who apply for public assistance. Those who need relief apply for it as readily as the unemployed workman applies for his unemployment pay. Relief is accepted without shame or regret—in fact, in exactly the same spirit as that in which ex-Cabinet Ministers, Royalties, and others accept their pensions and allowances from the Government.

In Poplar it is well understood that the poor are poor because they are robbed, and are robbed because they are poor.

The issue that is raised by Poplar is larger than an issue of local government. It is the whole question whether the labour movement means business. Are we going to attempt to carry out what we say on the platform, or are we to be misled and side-tracked by considerations of 'statesmanship'. I have no doubt of the answer of the rank and file members of the labour movement. We all need to stand together, and not to waste time belittling and decrying one another's work. That is why I deplore the attacks which have been made against our work by some friends in high places in the movement, and which have compelled me to write this article. I would warn our friends not to take up an 'official' view in opposition to the ordinary men and women who make up the movement. The recent elections, with the overwhelming Poplar successes in the very midst of the losses of other sections not identified with Poplar, should be a warning to those in control. The Poplar policy is supported, not only by the workers in Poplar, but by the bulk of the active workers in the labour movement all over the country.

(From 'Poplar and the Labour Party', by George Lansbury, *Labour Monthly*, June 1922)

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LIAISON COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

Kevin Halpin
Chairman
Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions

THE Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions is calling a conference in London on February 12. It is taking place at a time when the Tories are making an all-out bid to cripple the trade unions, with unemployment and the coming into operation of the Industrial Relations Act. Their main aim is to stop working class militancy from taking advantage of high profits. They try to minimise the unemployed figure where they can by showing that it isn't going up. We maintain that the figure is an underestimate.

A comparison of census figures for 1966 with the Department of Employment figures for the same period shows that industries such as engineering had 0.64 per cent unemployed registered by the DEP, but the census shows 1.66 per cent unemployed in this group. This is similar for all groups, and taken overall the 1966 DEP figure is 1.6 per cent unemployed—while the census figure is nearly one per cent higher—that is, 10 out of 26 unemployed were not registered, and this is probably higher now. Apply the DEP figure of nearly one million and we get a true figure of one-and-a-half million comprising wives who don't qualify for the dole, young people who have never registered, those who are on the lump, people whose supplementary benefit is stopped under the one month rule, and others with reasons for not signing on for the dole.

Have the Tories deliberately created unemployment? Yes, they welcomed it as their method of disciplining the trade unions. But they are now proving that they are not in control. For with public campaigning and pressure against them they have taken certain steps which previously reversed unemployment: hire-purchase easing, bank rate lowering. The result has been only that we have the same number on the dole. This fight to change policy must continue, with the rejection of the theories of how many should be on the dole. The social acceptance of a figure of unemployed has always paved the way for a higher figure at the next stage. The 600,000 unemployed of the Labour Government era led to the one-and-a-half million of the Tories.

The new phenomenon in connection with unemployment is that it comes at a time when profits and share prices are at an all time

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high. Profitability per worker is high. This is the payoff for mergers, takeovers, new methods of production. There is a direct connection between productivity deals and the dole queue. Every job lost is one more for the dole. Take engineering: the magazine *Metal Working Production* finds in its survey that the number of metal working machine tools in Britain has dropped in the ten years from 1961 to 1971, from 1.25 million to less than one million; is it any wonder that between August 1970 and August 1971 there were 229,000 less workers in the metal-using industries?

With this new type of unemployment has gone a new thinking to combat it. The pioneers of the unemployed workers' movement fought for more outdoor relief: 'work of maintenance'. The new attitude is shown by UCS, Don Valley, Plesseys. There is also growing rejection of selling of jobs. The Redundancy Payments Act for a time successfully beheaded the fight against redundancy, and resulted in many cases of people volunteering for the sack. But this is ending, for workers realise that they are not volunteering to change their jobs but for long-term unemployment. The docks once had no shortage of volunteers for severance pay; even though handling greater tonnages, the port employers claim they need fewer workers and are contemplating sacking dockers or putting them in low fallback rate pools in order to force them out.

This change of attitude is one of refusing to go on the scrap heap but to fight for jobs. This is not a defensive fight and above all should not be the fight of the unemployed alone. No return to the thirties when the unemployed had to organise themselves. This is a joint fight, but all too rarely do we see examples of unions like the Transport and General Workers' Union organising unemployed in branches in the North East. If the trade unions do not organise the unemployed then they run the risk of their falling for the demagogy of enemies of the trade unions.

Unemployment needs tackling the right way: road building will not solve it. Only by transferring the huge profits into spending power for working people can a start be made. Abolition of overtime, substantial pay increases, shorter work hours, longer holidays are but a start. Accepting wage norms of six or seven per cent is only putting more on the dole.

It is no accident that the Industrial Relations Act coincides with this unemployment, for unemployment hasn't weakened shop floor militancy in many industries as much as the employers hoped. How soon will this Act be used? Maybe the Tories will take it easy? This is the talk going round the trade unions, but already actions

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are being taken. Parsons Ltd dismissed an employee for refusing to join AUEW-TASS; Lord Denning ruled on appeal that the member should be taken back and given longer notice in order that he might benefit under the Act when it came in. Parsons AUEW-TASS members are now having to work with a non-unionist whilst the union considers the next steps. This attacks the closed shops.

The engineering industry has no procedure agreement; the unions after 50 years have cancelled the York Agreement, enforced by an employers' lockout. Already there are press reports of British Leyland considering applying to the Industrial Court for a procedure agreement. Under the Act individual companies can apply but not employers' federations. If an agreement is granted by the Industrial Relations Commission, this can be confirmed by the Industrial Relations Court and then become binding. Result—an agreement between trade unions and employers which was never agreed.

These are but opening shots. There is talk of employers' strategy: but this Act is now law*. Any employer has only to take trade unionists to court for 'unfair industrial practice', which covers a wide range, get an injunction and . . . the trade unionists retreat from their action or can be gaoled for contempt of court. Then the problem starts, and solidarity action is needed immediately.

The trade union movement has taken good decisions so far. The NIRC and Tribunals have not been able to get one tame trade union leader on them. It isn't many years ago that trade union officials would have been queuing for the jobs and the New Years Honours that went with them. There will soon be eight-and-a-half million trade unionists agreeing not to register. This will be after the various rules revision conferences have met. Trade unions who thought it in their interest to register are having second thoughts on the basis that there is possibly more protection under the anti-poaching Bridlington Agreement than there is through the Registrar. This attitude of non-registration has prevented a wedge being driven between the officials and rank-and-file: everyone is in the same boat.

This is the situation facing our conference: how to get a united militant fight? How to take the offensive? How to change disgust with the Tories into a militant movement to end them and set our sights to new perspectives. Only militancy will defeat them. Strikes, sit-ins, work-ons, non-co-operation. This is the need now, and must be realised. The trade unions will only get support if they lead with confidence and new ideas.

* See *Industrial Relations Act 1971*, Labour Research Department, 40 pp., 12p (14½p by post).

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STUDENT ACTION

Jeff Staniforth*
Executive Officer
National Union of Students

TEN years ago the working class image of students was little different from that of 50 years ago. A privileged élite with the prospect of becoming the next administration generation of the ruling class; with rag-days, boating and boozing thrown in as fringe benefits.

By 1972 a very different image is emerging. Many student unions now have strong links with their local trades council. The National Union of Students (now with over half-a-million members) has a long-term policy of wages instead of grants, and even hopes for eventual affiliation to the TUC. These more than any other single item reflect the deep basic changes taking place. These changes are fundamentally reflected in the extension of higher education and the political struggles which have accompanied these developments.

The rapid expansion in student numbers, allied with the effects of Tory and right-wing Labour Governments, has inextricably linked the future of the majority of students with the future of the working class.

The vast majority of students are now being trained as skilled workers of one sort or another as these figures indicate: out of every 1,000 students some 400 will become teachers or engineers, whilst in the traditional subjects only 13 are studying economics and two philosophy, and most of this small grouping eventually have to face the prospect of working for a living. Unemployment is not a phenomenon students can afford to examine sociologically; it is a real threat to themselves. Whilst the middle class has predictably snapped up the highest proportion of new student places, there is an increase in the number of working class kids gaining access to higher education. Previously the relatively few workers' children who slipped through the net into higher education were usually absorbed into the system and alienated from their class background. Today, because of the sheer weight of their numbers, they can retain pride in their class and identify with it.

Of especial importance in this development has been the expansion of the 'public sector' (i.e. polytechnics, technical colleges and colleges of education) at the expense of the university sector. This

* Jeff Staniforth writes here in an individual capacity.

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massive attempt at education on the cheap has pushed thousands of working class students together in the worst-treated section of higher education. As a result they are often the most united and best organised section of the student community.

Based on these changes the left in the student movement was able ten years ago to launch a long-term campaign under the slogan of 'reclaim the student unions for students'. This movement was based on the perspective of moving masses of students into action on the issues facing them. The early successes of this campaign caused a series of NUS right-wing leaders to conduct a particularly vicious anti-left campaign, with all the usual trappings of secret meetings, forged documents and anonymous circulars. Added to this, many local student unions were dominated by those with 60 per cent interest in formal dinners and debates and 40 per cent interest in enhancing their own career prospects. However the left policy was correct in inception and in implementation, and consequently the gradual quantitative change has now developed into a qualitative change, with the leadership, policies and campaigning tactics so altered that those from ten years ago would have some difficulty in recognising it as the same organisation. The task of course is by no means completed; rather is the student movement now sufficiently broadly based for further developments.

Not surprisingly, these radical developments in the student movement have not endeared student organisations to the establishment. This is the real reason behind the Government's current anti-student union campaign. This attack, under the guise of 'concern over the possibility of some unions mis-spending public money', is in reality an attempt to weaken student unions financially in order to destroy their growing militancy.

The thought of this Tory Government expressing 'concern' over this question, with its own background of massive military expenditure and subsidy of monopoly, coupled with its vicious attacks on the living standards of workers, pensioners and children, would be laughable if it weren't so tragic.

The NUS with its conception of mass involvement of the membership was able confidently to call on students publicly to demonstrate their total rejection of this Tory attack. A National Day of Action was called for December 8. The response was magnificent, with over 400,000 students participating on the day in some form of action, including marches, rallies, teach-ins, street theatre and a host of other activities.

Thirteen thousand students demonstrated in Manchester, 8,000

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in Leeds, 5,000 in Brighton, 4,000 in Nottingham. These figures give some indication of the reaction of students, and of the correctness of the demand. These actions together with pressure from many directions have forced the Government to delay any implementation of its proposals for a year. At the time of writing NUS is organising for a massive demonstration in London on January 23 which it is hoped will encourage the Government to drop its proposals altogether. Many also see the demonstration as an opportunity for the biggest anti-Tory event so far, as indicated by the involvement of trade unions at a national level by providing speakers and at a local level by the involvement of trades councils. This support from the labour movement is significant of a development of major importance to students.

The relationship between students and trade unions has not always been a happy one. The students who acted as strike-breakers in 1926 left a taste in the mouths of many workers, and little that has happened since has caused that taste to disappear. However the past two years has been a period during which NUS has proved itself genuinely in support of trade union activities. As a result unions are now much more ready to discuss questions with NUS and to give real advice and assistance. The forging of closer links with workers and their organisations is crucial to the continued development of students and their unions. In this respect the building up of relationships with trades councils has been of particular value, and must be the centre of continued liaison.

Prospects for the future are tremendous. The continued development of building a strong progressive student movement will have an immense effect on higher education in Britain and will convince many more students that their real position is as allies of the working class movement. The growing links between students and workers are more than symbols of political desires; they are the guarantee of moving another large section of the people into an anti-Tory, anti-monopoly position and strengthening the central position of the working class in the struggle for socialism.

SUSSEX MEETINGS

Following upon the success of the first open meeting of Sussex *Labour Monthly* Discussion Groups held at the Railway Hotel, Brighton, on the first Monday in December, regular discussion meetings will be held at the same venue on the first Monday in every month. *LM* readers interested in helping to form small groups in any part of Sussex, and/or participating in the monthly central meetings referred to above, should contact the Organising Secretary, Ernest Trory, 57 Tivoli Crescent, Brighton, BN1 5NB.

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STOCKHOLM 72—WHAT THEN?

Pauline K. Marstrand*
Science Policy Research Unit
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EVER since the late 1940s scientists working individually or in groups have participated in discussions on the threats to the environment posed by some aspects of technological development and reported their own observations to appropriate national and international organisations. By the early 1960s widespread unwanted side effects of the use of pesticides, documented by Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring*, and the disastrous results of rapid development of some technologies in Japan and Israel led to several important conferences at various levels: United Nations 1961, Council of Europe 1964, American Association for Advancement of Science 1966, Canadian Resource Ministers 1967, among others. In 1967-68 Swedish scientists verified the high levels of mercury and other metals in fish and other wild life, and the Swedish Government began the passage of comprehensive legislation for the control of all kinds of pollution and at the same time invited the UN assembly to hold a World Scientific Conference on the Environment at Stockholm in 1972.

In the beginning some developing countries were suspicious that this was yet another ploy to deny them the fruits of technology but, with the appointment of Canadian Maurice Strong as Secretary General to the Conference in late autumn 1970, things began to move and to change. A great deal of consultation between developing countries and the Conference Secretariat took place in early 1971, inviting them to voice their fears and to participate in the Conference as a way of ensuring that it would not be used as a means of keeping them out of technological advance. To an extent these efforts succeeded, and more than twenty developing countries prepared national reports as inputs to the conference preparations.

Nations and special agencies were invited to submit material on all aspects of the natural and built environment, and national governments could invite contributions to assist them in the production of their reports. The topics most often included in the reports were the natural and built environment, transport and energy

* This article was written before the crisis arising as a result of the German Federal Republic refusing to agree to the participation of the German Democratic Republic in the Conference, in view of which the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia have indicated that they cannot participate in the Conference if the ban is upheld.—*Ed.*

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programmes, town planning, the provision of outdoor recreational opportunities and the requirements for a healthy, creative and productive life for the peoples of the world. The natural resource giving most cause for concern appears to be water. Many developed countries now face serious shortages and the need for drastic redeployment; many have a substantial proportion of their available resources seriously polluted; developing countries are often in arid zones with a basic water shortage and with hot climates causing heavy losses of stored water by evaporation. Transport is also likely to be a major planning problem, posing, as it does, the choice between engines powered by fossil fuels or their derivatives, increasingly a cause of air pollution, especially in sunny climates, and other more experimental systems not yet fully proved. The Conference should have implications for all people, whatever the stage of development of their nation and whatever their position in its community. It could serve to illustrate that development as it occurred in nineteenth century Europe and America, although it brought increased prosperity to sections of the community, impoverished and degraded others; while all are now paying the cost of bad planning and lack of foresight. Developing countries still have the opportunity of planning the introduction of technology for maximum benefit and minimum cultural and environmental damage.

The Conference will be organised around eight agenda items. From the mass of papers submitted the Secretariat, aided by consultants, have prepared Position Papers and Action Proposals for each agenda item. The position papers are basically digests of material in the various reports, and the action proposals arise out of these. These documents will be official papers of the conference and will be issued to delegates in advance.

The Conference will be attended by representatives from member governments, and there will be room for about 300 non-government observers. These places will be allocated among organisations deemed to have contributed towards growing awareness of the problems or which are representative of groups especially affected by decisions concerning development and pollution control.

It is envisaged that the matters considered will be designated for action at three levels. The preliminary papers will recommend levels of action, but the Conference will be able to promote or demote a particular recommendation in committee.

> Level I action will include effects which require further study and need to be watched, but about which there is probably not enough knowledge

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to make specific recommendations.

Level II action will embody the main part of the substantive decisions to be taken, and will be in the form of outline plans for action, not for ratification at this stage. It is expected that this level will form the basis of subsequent national and international measures to improve the situation.

Level III action will be on a few major topics about which there is already a fair amount of agreement. Conventions for ratification will be proposed concerning these. Marine Pollution, Monitoring, Standards of Emission and Transfer of Species from one country to another are all likely to be discussed at this level.

A committee of over 100 consultants chaired by Professor Rene Dubos is co-operating with Lady Jackson (Barbara Ward) in the production of a book, *Report on the State of the Human Environment*, to be published well in advance as the basis for public discussion around the issues to be raised at the Conference.

At the end of the Conference it is expected that a 'Declaration on the Human Environment' will be signed. This will be a public commitment by all signatories to honour the intentions of the declaration. How far this commitment will be honoured in practice will depend on the determination of people to see that it is.

What effects can it have? Cynics will say 'none' and this could be true, but it need not be so. In nearly every country there is now at least a small group of people who have thought about the implications of development and technology and the possibility of controlling and directing it to achieve a real improvement in the quality of life. Whatever the political climate of the country in which they work, the suggested aims and solutions of scientists are remarkably similar. All advocate more consultations between government, industry and community to plan development and amelioration; more inter-disciplinary investigation of particular developments; more examination of the reasons behind past failure to control unwanted side effects and more standardisation of control measures. They differ in their proposals for financing these measures, and here the more 'competitive' the economy the more complicated and difficult to implement the fiscal measures tend to be. Since 1964 or so the socialist countries of Eastern Europe have passed and implemented a great deal of relevant legislation, so that from being among those with the most pollution-prone industrial plant they plan to be among the cleanest by 1980. Probably they will achieve this aim, and the capitalist countries will have to find ways of keeping up with them. How they do this will be interesting to observe, since basically questions of redistribution of the benefits and burdens of technology are involved.

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BANGLADESH—MYTH AND REALITY

Conrad Wood

THE period since the second world war has been one rich in political mythology. For example, constant repetition by innumerable broadcasters of the fable of 'North Korean aggression' has elevated this 'explanation' for the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 into a hallowed chapter of the Gospel according to the BBC. It is now quite clear that the last weeks of 1971 saw the birth of yet another legend for the body of journalistic folklore: India's 'attack' on Pakistan, December 1971.

The main elements of this myth have by now taken shape: towards the end of 1971 India launched an attack on Pakistan to enable the ten million refugees from Bangladesh to return home. The suggestion is that India had the motive to start the war whilst the Pakistan military junta of Yahya Khan had none. Implicit in this argument is the idea that the Bangladesh liberation forces, the *Mukti Bahini*, posed no serious threat to Yahya. If this is so (it is suggested), the only way to break the grip of the Pakistan dictatorship on Bangladesh (and thereby permit the return of the refugees) was for the Indian army to invade and defeat the Pakistan military in the area. Once this argument is accepted, the way is open to claim that the people of Bangladesh were liberated not principally by their own efforts but by the grace of the Indian Government and that Bangladesh is therefore a client state of India.

It is the aim of this article to present, before the myth gains wide currency, evidence to show that the resistance of the people of Bangladesh to the Yahya tyranny was becoming so effective that by late 1971 the Pakistan junta was in desperate straits. The West Pakistan army and police force in Bangladesh were becoming demoralised and the administration of the military regime over vast areas was non-existent or breaking down. In West Pakistan the economy was in chaos and the people increasingly alienated from the regime as the burdens of Yahya's war of repression were placed on their shoulders.

Once this situation was reached the only way out of the *impasse* for Yahya (short of granting the legitimate demands of the people of Bangladesh) was the attempt to convert the dispute from one between the Pakistan ruling class and East Bengal to one between

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India and Pakistan by the launching of an offensive across the border between India and West Pakistan. If the Pakistan air attack on December 3 had managed to cripple the Indian air force, the Indian army, without air cover, might well have had to concede much Indian territory on the West Pakistan frontier. Such gains for Yahya in the west would then have been a weighty bargaining counter with which to attempt to save the junta's hold on Bangladesh.

The evidence presented below has been culled from the reports appearing in the pages of the *Times* over the months leading up to the war. It shows that, contrary to current mythology, the *Mukti Bahini* steadily became a force which made Yahya realise that independence of Bangladesh was only a matter of time unless desperate measures were taken:—

Excerpts from a report on 'the western area of East Pakistan by Mr Hendrick van der Heijden, member of a mission of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development that visited the area' in June 1971. 'The report was obtained by the New York Times' *and appeared in the* Times *on July 14, 1971:*

> The Jessore area . . . is by no means secure. Government officers cannot any more easily enter the villages as they run the risk of being shot by the 'miscreants'. . . . [At] Chalna Anchorage, a total of five ships were anchored, some having waited for two weeks to receive cargo. Traffic on the river is down to five-ten per cent of what it used to be. The project to construct a permanent port at Chalna has been indefinitely delayed: all of the workers have fled, as have the Yugoslav consultants. . . . The farmers are not coming to the cities, and nobody goes out. Thousands of farmers have fled. Everything is abnormal there, and it was a shattering experience.

On September 12, Denzil Peiris, an Asian News Service correspondent who had 'recently visited East and West Pakistan' reported from Delhi:

> After two months of training . . . the first group of 5,000 *Mukti Bahini* . . . guerrillas are operational. . . . They supplement the 10,000 regular troops of the East Bengal Regiment and the Pakistan Rifles, based in the forests 60 miles from Dacca and in the Chittagong hill tracts. . . . Ninety per cent of the culverts and small bridges on the roads linking Dacca to Comilla, Feni, Jessore and Kushtia have been destroyed . . . the guerrillas are destroying the credibility of the Pakistan Army and the military administration to maintain law and order. They are forcing the Army to spend between 20 and 30 million rupees (about £1.6 million) a month to keep 48 battalions in East Bengal. . . . Minor officials have fled, or are immobilised by fear.

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All levels, resentful of the Punjabi 'conquerors' from West Pakistan, work perfunctorily.

Many traders have also fled, and the breakdown of the retail trade has affected the jute industry. . . . Factory production is estimated at 35 per cent of capacity. The Pakistan Tobacco Company has cut output to 40 per cent. Eleven tea plantations . . . have halted production. . . . The *Pakistan Observer*, published in Dacca, describes the guerrillas as 'pitiless perpetrators of death and destruction . . . creating a sense of insecurity with their hit and run raids and building up an atmosphere of chaos and uncertainty'. . . . In West Pakistan, Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto . . . is moving towards a showdown with President Yahya Khan. Crowds surround him on his tours with petitions which often ask him not only to relieve them of their oppressions but also to punish officials who have acted 'unjustly'.

Increasing unemployment, victimisation of militant trade unionists who lose their jobs under the cover of economic crisis, and higher prices are further pressures on Mr Bhutto's image as a national leader. . . . Another sign of growing frustration is the calls for political change and an end to the excesses in the East now being made by prominent public figures.

From Peter Hazelhurst, Calcutta, September 24:

Frogmen, apparently members of the East Bengal resistance movement, have severely damaged a 16,000-ton British cargo ship, the *Teviotbank*, which was loading jute off the East Pakistan part of Chalna. . . . The 10,000-ton *Ohrmazo* sank at the bows after limpet mines holed her beneath the waterline on August 14. . . . Although they have suffered severe casualties the East Bengal guerrillas have also been far more successful in launching land operations against the West Pakistanis than observers at first expected.

From Malcolm W. Browne, Dacca, November 4:

The most spectacular act of sabotage carried out by the guerrillas yesterday was the sinking in Chittagong of a large oil tanker. . . . Electric power in Dacca and elsewhere in East Pakistan has been progressively disrupted by sabotage to the point where there are half a dozen power cuts every day.

Skirmishing between troops or police and guerrillas in Dacca now occurs nearly every day.

From Peter Hazelhurst, Delhi, November 8:

It is not hard to determine the logical sequence of events which will lead to war. If and when the West Pakistanis begin to believe that they are losing their grip on East Pakistan because of pressure from the guerrillas, President Yahya Khan, in desperation, will obviously have to strike at the rebels' source of strength, India. Under the circumstances, he would probably strike on the more favourable fighting grounds on the western front and particularly in the disputed territory of Kashmir. From India's point of view this would mean war on all fronts.

While it would appear unlikely that an already debilitated Pakistan

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could afford a war, President Yahya Khan might be forced to take a desperate risk to save the eastern wing. His reasoning would be that, in the event of hostilities, the United Nations would almost certainly intervene and, in the subsequent ceasefire negotiations, Pakistan would hope to bargain for a package deal: Pakistan would maintain peace in Kashmir provided India refrained from assisting the guerrillas in East Pakistan.

From Malcom W. Browne, Dacca, November 8:

The guerrillas operate more or less at will, despite constant search and destroy operations by the Army. . . . Military morale is understood to have declined. . . . The increasing number of Army casualties has apparently made it impossible to continue a former policy of flying the bodies of officers back to West Pakistan for burial.

Police morale has also suffered. Last March the entire East Pakistan police force joined the Bengali rebels, and many former policemen now serve as weapons instructors for the growing ranks of guerrilla recruits. . . . A highly placed source said some policemen staged a one-day strike last week in protest against their continued tour in East Pakistan—*New York Times* News Service.

From David Housego, Rawalpindi (West Pakistan), November 9:

The economic cost of holding down East Bengal is now being felt in people's daily lives in terms both of rapidly rising prices and unemployment. Enough soldiers have been lost for the campaign to have made a human impact in villages and cities.

At the same time, doubts can be heard, in private at least, on whether the severity of the Army's action in March was justified.

From a Special Correspondent, Dacca, November 9:

Political assassinations by the guerrillas have now reached a rate of a. least a half dozen a day in East Pakistan—*New York Times* News Servicet

David Housego, Rawalpindi, November 11, spoke of evidence 'that the Army's grip on the eastern wing of the country is being eroded':

The danger is that despair will get the upper hand and that repeated reverses in the east will drive Pakistan to some desperate action.

From David Housego, Lahore, November 17:

The President [Yahya Khan] has said that he is 'fed up with this affair', and that the Army is 'browned off'. 'My people must be cursing me for not doing something. But we must be patient,' he said.

Mr Zulfikar Bhutto, leader of the biggest political party in the western wing, says that Pakistan is in 'a terrible mess'.

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TRADE UNIONS AND SOCIALISM IN FRANCE

David Pavett

ON March 31 of this year the Executive Committee of the CGT* put the finishing touches to a document entitled 'Topics for reflection on the prospects of socialism for France and the role of the unions'. It has now been published in English by the CGT. The document represents a part of the CGT's effort to clarify its own objectives, to make its views better known and to encourage other sections of the labour movement in France to be more explicit about their aims.

The first section of the document deals with the reasons why a fundamental change in society is necessary. The workers are obliged 'to repel constant attacks on their standard of living, to defend the purchasing power of their wages against price increases and to fight to improve it. They come up against the refusal to grant demands which present living and working conditions render urgent, such as a reduction of working hours, a lowering of the age of retirement and improved pensions.' This struggle leads more and more workers to question the role of the monopolies and the state which serves their interests.

As the document explains capitalism cannot provide such basic needs as job security and individual and collective fulfilment. 'Even less can it respond to the need for democracy and for full responsibility in economic, social and political life, so deeply felt by the workers.' The ruling Gaullist party has been making a lot of noise about its intention to create a 'new society' and has recently even claimed to be more genuinely socialist than the Communist Party! Noting these demagogic tactics the CGT says: '. . . in resorting to this, the ruling classes confirm the existence of a great desire for deep changes.' It then adds: 'In present circumstances, any real change presupposes an attack on capitalist monopoly domination and the imposition of democratic transformations.' That a trade union believes in and fights for socialism is one thing; that it should consider its role to be that of a political party is another, and the document is extremely clear on this point.

* Confederation Generale du Travail (General Confederation of Labour) the largest of the French trade union centres; the document is available from Press Department, CGT, 213 Rue la Fayette, Paris 10, France.

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> It is on the political parties whose aim is socialism that the main responsibility rests. As a mass organisation widely grouping workers who have varying conceptions, the CGT does not intend to substitute itself for these parties, and does not set itself the task of replying to all the problems which arise in relation to socialism.

Trade unions, however, because of their role and experience have a specific role to play in the fight for and construction of socialism. The second part of the document goes into more detail about the nature of socialism. The points dealt with include the different forms of collective ownership, democratic control of the economy and the factories, planning, the rights of workers and trade unions, the extension of democracy and the role and responsibility of the unions. The distinction of different forms of collective ownership is useful. Of course, for enterprises 'of national dimensions and of national interest, ownership will lie with the nation.' In addition there can be ownership at the level of regions, counties and towns and also co-operatives. Amongst other things these various forms will make it possible to carry out the transition from small-scale private ownership to social ownership in a humane way.

National planning for the CGT is absolutely necessary to ensure the balanced development of the productive forces, but within this framework the maximum amount of autonomy should be given to individual enterprises. The workers would have extended rights 'to control over management and to the application of decisions which they have been involved in taking.' Also, 'the application of social legislation, drawn up with the unions, will be placed under their control.' Despite the active role of the unions in building socialism, the CGT states: 'They will retain their Independence with regard to the state and to parties.' The point that unions are not political parties and will not become so under socialism is re-emphasised. While discussing union rights, the document says: '. . . the right to strike and other rights to trade union action will be guaranteed.'

The final section discusses the need to rally the majority of the population to the ideas of socialism through their engagement in struggle for immediate democratic and economic advances. The working class (in the strict sense of productive workers, which is more apparent in the French term 'ouvrier' than in the English 'worker') is seen as the central force. For success, however, the CGT says that the other working sections of the population must join the fight of the working class, since 'it requires an intense mass struggle to overcome the fierce resistance of the big bourgeoisie.'

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None of the basic problems of society can be solved while the monopolies are dominant. Starting from this point of view the CGT says all those suffering from this domination 'including those who are not yet supporters of the idea of socialism, can and must come together to put an end to domination by the capitalist monopolies and substitute for it a regime of real economic and political democracy.' This evidently implies nationalisation and extensive democratic rights for the workers, but it is important to realise that it is not yet socialism since not all private industry—even large scale production—is monopolised. Thus exploitation would still exist and therefore also class struggle. What is of importance is to see that this stage of development 'will create the most favourable conditions for isolating the big bourgeoisie, winning the majority of the people to socialism and permitting the passage to the building of a socialist France.'

The document ends by explaining that even though trade unions are not political parties they have as their 'continual mission' to improve the workers' conditions and to repel attempts to integrate them into the system. They have a specific role then because their activity 'contributes to increasing the consciousness and strengthening the position of the working class.' The CGT offers its document as a basis for discussion both within the CGT and outside it. It states its readiness, on the basis of the ideas of the document to 'pursue the discussions already started with the various parties of the left.'

SCIENCE & SOCIETY

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James F. Becker

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DISCUSSION GROUPS

Long-standing readers of *Labour Monthly*, like myself, may recall that during the war there existed a really large number of discussion groups through the United Kingdom based upon the magazine. These met monthly and, with the aid of 'Discussion Notes' issued to them, exchanged ideas on one or more of the political issues dealt with in the current number of the magazine. There should be no doubt, I think, that these played a part in the political preparation in people's thinking which culminated in the great Tory electoral defeat of 1945.

Is something of the same kind now starting? Certainly, it would be just as apt when one takes account of the ferment over fundamental questions in the minds of so many Labour Party members, and others, too.

All this is prompted by my being invited to open a discussion in December by the *Labour Monthly* Discussion Group which meets in Brighton on 'Socialism and Capitalism'. This Group hasn't existed very long, yet we had 15 people present, most of them not members of a political party though, as to some, having former affiliations. At least six appeared to be too young for any political 'past'! In the general discussion, ten people took part, making distinct contributions rather than mere interjections.

Helpful contributions were made to a collection to meet expenses, and these included sums from interested people not able to come, one of whom was a grand veteran of 98 still as keen as mustard. Altogether, this was a happy experience for me and shows, I believe, that things are on the move. Time too!

Tom Vernon

LABOUR MONTHLY FIFTY YEARS AGO

The critics of the Communists are very prone to confuse force with violence. No group in the labour movement is more relentlessly opposed to deeds of individual violence than the Communist Party. Every political organisation in the world believes in force. Force is that social power derived from the organisation of individuals in such a manner as to enable them to enforce their will upon society. The real force of a revolutionary movement depends upon the way in which it is able to organise great masses of determined workers in every plane of social action, to set up new administrative organs to replace those of the old regime. This is the most important work of the revolution.

(From 'A Controversy on Violence', by William Paul,
Labour Monthly, February 1922)

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BOOKS

Prison Notebooks
Antonio Gramsci

Lawrence & Wishart, 284 pp., £6

ANTONIO GRAMSCI'S childhood and youth were spent in extreme poverty; and he obtained a university education only through sheer hard work and ability. After leaving university he became a journalist on a socialist paper and was involved in the 1917 uprising and the subsequent mass struggles of the workers of the industrial town of Turin.

In 1919 he and three others founded the journal *Ordine Nuovo*, which they called 'a review of socialist culture'. Its political line, influenced by the spontaneity of the Turin workers' movement, was syndicalist. Although its great merit lay in its appreciation of the power of the masses in action, this syndicalist line was sharply criticised by other left-wing sections; but the formation of a unified revolutionary party based clearly on Marxism took some time. By 1921, however, when the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) was formed, the workers had been defeated; but the party ignored Soviet advice to seek allies.

The following year, helped by the right-wing union leaders' sabotage of workers' action, the fascists seized power, led by the Socialist Party's renegade, Mussolini. During the next four years the fascists used terror and fraud to destroy the opposition. Yet Gramsci and others in the PCI consistently underestimated the future of fascism, an underestimate for which he, together with very many others, was to pay with his life. Years later he was to write: 'There was a failure to grasp what would happen if reaction triumphed, because the real struggle was not lived—only the struggle as a doctrinal "principle" ' (p. 225). In 1924 Gramsci was elected secretary-general of the PCI which, under those conditions of fraud and terror, now attempted unsuccessfully to obtain an anti-fascist coalition to fight the general election. But, as the view of many communists then was that there was little basic difference between social-democracy and fascism, it became easy for the right wing to reject such advances.

In 1926 the fascist jaws closed on the remnants of opposition, and Gramsci was jailed. For eleven years he endured tremendous suffering brought about by ill-treatment of the already seriously-deformed body with which he was born. In 1937 an international campaign finally secured his release, but by now his body was too weak and he died shortly after. The notebooks he painstakingly filled, of which this volume is an important selection, constitute a monument to a great revolutionary and a significant addition to Marxist literature.

During his prison years Gramsci had time enough to think about the past and to speculate on the future. While secretary-general of the PCI he had to fight both right and left deviations. On the left was the faction led by the veteran Bordiga, with his sectarian view of the Party victorious on its own against fascism and its tendency towards 'economism' and spontaneism, that is, regarding the workers' trade union struggles and spontaneous actions as sufficient. On the right, Gramsci had to fight against those who would liquidate the Party in the face of fascist victory.

Unfortunately, Gramsci was always afraid that the fascists would destroy his manuscripts. So he wrote in a very involved way, with frequent pseudonyms like Ilyich for Lenin and Bronstein for Trotsky. Moreover,

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the writings tend to be disjointed, like a series of extended notes. The result is that he is frequently hard to follow. Leaders therefore owe the editors, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, an immense debt of gratitude for the long introduction on Gramsci's life and its political background, as well as for the introductions to each section and the copious footnotes. The price is hefty, but a copy should at least be in every public, socialist and labour organisation library for all serious political persons to study.

The best-known section, 'The Modern Prince', tries to transfer the thought of Machiavelli, whom Gramsci admired, to modern conditions. The 'modern prince' is the revolutionary party of the working class, aiming, in alliance with an aroused peasantry, at national power (hegemony): the Renaissance individual leader replaced by the collective political will in action. As such the party must express the *national-popular* will—Gramsci's realisation that it was not good blindly to follow the one socialist state. The idea of the workers' party was Gramsci's answer on the one hand to the syndicalists who worshipped the workers' spontaneous action and, on the other hand, to those who worshipped tight centralism, the party as an élite above the masses.

Understandably, in the light of the inner-party struggles of his time and his own hard-won battles, Gramsci was particularly concerned about leadership. But it was to his credit that, while emphasising leadership, he could warn about 'conceit'. He was afraid, too, of bureaucratism. 'When the party is progressive,' he wrote, 'it functions "democratically" (democratic centralism); when the party is regressive it functions "bureaucratically" (bureaucratic centralism)' (p. 155). Bureaucratic centralism arose because of a lack of initiative and responsibility at the bottom. Painstaking care should therefore be taken to ensure a moving, two-way unity between leaders and rank-and-file. Significantly, he also warned of statolatry—state-worship—*after* the revolution.

Gramsci's fear of the effects of sectarianism—the party isolating itself by word or deed from the masses—was well-founded. It expressed itself in the leftist line put forward in the early twenties that the urban councils established by the revolutionary workers' movement should comprise PCI members only. This helped fascism to power by alienating non-party and non-industrial workers and petit bourgeoisie (small shopkeepers, professional people, clerks, etc.). He also argued that the revolutionary party could not rely on force alone, or on persuasion alone, but that each and both should be used, in the proper proportions, according to circumstances.

As an intellectual himself, it is not surprising that Gramsci had a good deal to say about intellectuals. One of the most important points he made was that all people were potential intellectuals, in the sense that all people could think and adopt a philosophy; but not all had the opportunity to practise as intellectuals. In his own words: 'All men are intellectuals . . . but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals' (p. 9). Most people's philosophy was 'common sense', what they picked up from past collective experience, including religion. But 'common sense' took the world as it is; and it had therefore to be subjected to criticism. This was the task of Marxism, because *its* aim was to change the world. Thus the fight against 'common sense' was a political and ideological struggle. 'For a mass of people to be

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led to think coherently and in the same coherent fashion about the real present world, is a "philosophical" event far more important and "original" than the discovery by some philosophical "genius" of a truth which remains the property of small groups of intellectuals' (p. 325). It followed that, in Gramsci's opinion, the intellectuals of a revolutionary party must arise from, and remain in contact with, the masses, and must be able to explain and to instil into them the philosophy of revolution. Gramsci was understandably keenly concerned about the intellectuals, because a very influential section of them (Kautsky, Bernstein, MacDonald) had been responsible for early social-democratic revisionism (reformism).

Throughout his writings Gramsci showed he never lost hope in the ultimate victory. Analysing the revolution-restoration syndrome (in Italy's case the victory of fascism after the workers' unsuccessful uprising) he concluded that restorations (reactions) were never total: the world moves on and the revolutionary movement revives and grows stronger. Moreover, the ruling class finds it increasingly difficult to use terror as a weapon; so it infiltrates the working class parties and trade unions via the right wingers.

If much of what Gramsci observed is now known, because the revolutionary movement has learned it the hard way, it is worth reading how, through his own and the PCI's bitter experience, he arrived at a broader, unsectarian approach to the role of the 'Modern Prince'. He had much to say about the relation of state to civil society, the idea of 'passive revolution' which allows reaction back, the role of religion, and education as work. He attacked the argument that economic crisis was the right time for revolution and argued that Trotsky's idea of permanent revolution could lead to passivity. He also posed many questions without giving answers, e.g., why did Marxism also produce crude materialism and philosophical idealism? The final section of the book, 'Problems of Marxism', will certainly be valuable as a basis for discussion of theoretical problems. But discussion without action is, as he himself remarked, sterile. 'The popular element "feels" but does not always know or understand,' he wrote; 'the intellectual element "knows" but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel. The two extremes are therefore pedantry and philistinism on the one hand and blind passion and sectarianism on the other' (p. 418). Workers and intellectuals must therefore be in continual interaction. Without this interaction both suffer.

H. FRANKEL

Birth of the Communist Manifesto
Edited by Dirk J. Struik

International Publishers (Central Books), 224 pp., £1.50

The Cologne Communist Trial
Karl Marx

Lawrence & Wishart, 298 pp., £3

THE BASIS AND INSPIRATION of the working class movement throughout the world derives from the *Communist Manifesto*, the most famous of all socialist programmes, the principles of which retain their validity today. All students of Marxism therefore will welcome the first of these two books giving not only the text and prefaces of the manifesto but valuable supplementary material of Marx and Engels relating to it. Moreover the introduction by a well-known American Marxist not

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only analyses its content but deals with its origin and significance so comprehensively (about half the book) as to form a survey of the development of the views of Marx and Engels from their earliest beginnings. Among the other documents are two illuminating confessions of faith or credos, in the form of question and answer, which Engels wrote for the Communist League in 1847 as preparatory material for the manifesto. The earlier of these was only found in 1968 and appears here in English translation for the first time.

The *Communist Manifesto* preceded and heralded the European revolutions of 1848-49. The book entitled *The Cologne Communist Trial* belongs to the period of the defeat of the revolution. It contains two works by Marx here published in English for the first time. In 1850 Marx with other revolutionaries was forced into exile in England. But in 1852 the Prussian Government decided to stage a 'monster trial' with maximum publicity against a number of Cologne communists who were supposed to be directed from London. It was to be a precedent for all such show trials, complete with concocted evidence of police spies, trumped-up charges of plot and conspiracy, and even documents forged by police agents. Marx wrote his 'Revelations' primarily to expose the machinations of the Prussian Government, and he did so in great detail. In spite of dire poverty, he was feverishly active in helping the defence during the trial itself, as shown not only by his letters to the press and other writings, given in the appendix to this volume, but also by the valuable sidelights provided by the editor and translator in his scholarly introduction, which is commendably free from the common academic attitude of superiority to Marx.

The second work by Marx in this volume gives another side to the picture of the aftermath of revolution. The manuscript of it was stolen by a police spy and not found until nearly a century later. Entitled *Heroes of the Exile* it is a scathing exposure of the 'left' democratic leaders who had fled to England. They were important men in their own eyes, having been parliamentary deputies, members of short-lived revolutionary governments, army leaders, etc. Marx unleashed the full force of his invective against them not because they were not socialists, but for their cowardice in the face of reaction in Germany and their romantic fantasies and empty posturings in exile. In somewhat unreadable detail and relentless satire he analyses their life histories and idiosyncracies. From these two works there is much that can be learnt of the lessons drawn by Marx from the experience of 1848.

CLEMENS DUTT

Strikes: a documentary history

R. and E. Frow and Michael Katanka

Charles Knight, 228 pp. £1.25

THIS BOOK contains an outline of industrial events from 1799 to 1971; accounts of 42 strikes and lock-outs from 1756 to 1926; the 1929 Red International of Labour Unions guide to strike strategy; a bibliography and an index. Excellent value at the price. Its pages reflect great deeds. The Tolpuddle Martyrs are rescued from transportation, Lancashire strikes for the Charter, the London builders starve rather than repudiate their union. We hear the cry of the match girls of 1888, the steady tramp of the London dockers on the march in 1889. The simple words of the 'Don't Shoot' appeal penetrate our hearts. The starving Dublin workers cheer the arrival of the solidarity foodship from Britain in 1913. The Clyde and Sheffield in 1915 and 1916 show how to defeat the government. Our anger

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rises at the calculated betrayal of the 1926 general strike.

What stands out from it all? That to change apathy into action, clear leadership is needed. That ordinary men and women, when inspired by a just cause, rise to great achievements. That not all the force and fraud at the state's disposal can suppress the struggle. Strike experience, whatever the immediate result, is essential to develop class consciousness, 'to form the proletariat into a class', as Marx put it. Today younger labour movements than ours are solving new problems and building socialism. Ours is still trying, disunitedly, to cope with the old problems of our grandfathers—wages, hours, rights. We have not taken Marx's second step, 'the overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy'. Trade union struggle has gained valuable reforms; it has not ended the exploitation of labour by capital. For that, socialism is necessary. Trade unionists who do not want another 170 years of capitalism can gain strength from this book to win their unions for a socialist policy.

JOHN MAHON

Handicap

Joan K. McMichael, MB ChB

Staples Press, 208 pp., £2.75

DR JOAN MCMICHAEL'S book is a comprehensive study of every aspect of the problems of physically handicapped children—medical, psychological, educational and social.

The book is based on a survey of fifty children and their families from a primary day school for physically handicapped children in London. It is an investigation in depth, and the very intimacy of the accounts of each family's attempts to come to terms with their difficulties makes the book valuable reading for the teachers, caseworkers and doctors concerned with this problem. The individual cases clearly have wider significance as part of the general pattern of hardship facing families of children with other handicaps—mental subnormality, psychiatric disorder or severe backwardness.

Understandably, adequate housing was found to be the outstanding social need. A ground-floor flat or a house with a garden is a minimal necessity, yet the great majority of the children studied lived in poor, overcrowded homes, or high up in large blocks of flats. The attendant problems hardly need underlining. There is the difficulty of movement—if only to hospital for treatment; the normal day-to-day care of other children in the family; the restrictions of leisure; the parents' emotional adjustment to their child's handicap. All these factors contribute to the anxiety, depression, tension and chronic fatigue from which almost two-thirds of the mothers suffered.

More than half of the children had emotional difficulties, and at least thirty per cent of parents showed some rejection of their handicapped children. It is against this background that Dr McMichael makes the recommendations that conclude the survey. These outline the need for much closer supervision of the handicapped child and his family at every stage in relation to his problems—physical, emotional, educational and, above all, social.

There are concrete proposals for a special housing category to be instituted for handicapped families, a rota of trained 'sitters-in' and the establishment of holiday play-centres. These reforms would go some way to relieving the strain on parents and siblings of the handicapped.

Dr McMichael's picture of the problems facing the families she studied, and the courage so many of them showed in meeting them, make this study a major contribution to its subject. It leaves us asking how we can help.

JOAN WODDIS

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THEY LEAD THE WAY

OUR £100-a-month target usually represents a peak towards which our collecters and donors struggle. But in December, records are regularly smashed by—and gratitude to them is due from all who read and use *LM* in the labour movement—the large number of readers who renew their subscriptions with the start of each year. It is their willingness to add extra pence when doing so that gives us our soaring total here.

December also saw a wonderful effort in extra sales of the journal. The article by South Ayrshire MP Jim Sillars encouraged Scottish supporters to take a hundred copies sale-or-return, of which they reported 78 sold. These had been taken at the trade union centre in Glasgow, by transport workers, students and of course by the miners, then facing the probability of the strike which is now receiving massive support for its lead in giving the Tory Government the shaking it must experience if we are to move to the stage of forcing an early general election.

Nicola Seyd

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